

1. (Twice Amended) Compositions for the preservative treatment of raw animal hides, characterized in that such compositions contain a mixture of:

at least one superabsorbent (co)polymer capable of absorbing the internal moisture of the rawhide when deposited on the surface of the hide, while allowing the internal moisture necessary for good preservation of the hide to remain, and of

at least one other hydrophilic agent,

optionally bactericides, preservative agents, and the like,

wherein the monomers used to form the superabsorbent polymers are monomers containing one or more members selected from the group consisting of: carboxyl groups; mono or polycarboxylic acids with monoethylene unsaturation; carboxylic acid anhydrides; polycarboxylic acid anhydrides with monoethylene unsaturation; carboxylic acid salts; water-soluble salts; alkaline metal salts, ammonium salts, amine salts, of mono or polycarboxylic acids with monoethylene unsaturation; sulfonic acid groups; aliphatic or aromatic vinylsulfonic acids; sulfonic acid groups; alkaline metal salts, ammonium salts, amino salts of monomers containing sulfonic acid groups; hydroxyl groups; alcohols with monoethylene unsaturation; amide groups; (meth)acrylamide, N-alkyl (meth)acrylamides, N,N-dialkyl (meth)acrylamides, N-hydroxyalkyl (meth)acrylamides, vinyl lactames; amino groups; esters containing amino groups of mono or di-carboxylic acid with monoethylene unsaturation heterocyclic vinyl compounds; quaternary ammonium salts; and salts of N,N,N-trialkyl-N-(meth)acryloyloxyalkylammonium.

5. (Twice Amended) Compositions for preservative treatment of animal rawhides as specified in claim 1, wherein the monomers used to form appropriate superabsorbent polymers are selected from members of the group consisting of: acrylamide, acrylic acid, methacrylic acid, sulfomethylated chloromethylated dimethylaminoethyl acrylate, chloromethylated and sulfomethylated dimethylaminoethyl-methacrylate.

6. (Twice Amended) Compositions for preservative treatment of animal rawhides as specified in claim 1, wherein the superabsorbent polymers are selected from members of the group consisting of: crosslinked polyacrylamides; crosslinked polyacrylates; crosslinked acrylamide/acrylate copolymers; sulfomethylated or chloromethylated acrylamide/dimethyl-aminoethylacrylate (ADAME) copolymers; sulfomethylated or chloromethylated acrylamide/dimethyl-aminoethylmethacrylate (MADAME) copolymers; crosslinked polymers of acrylic acid or methacrylic acid, inoculated and crosslinked copolymers of the polysaccharide/acrylic or methacrylic acid type, ternary crosslinked acrylic or methacrylic acid/sulfonated acrylamide copolymers and their alkaline metal or alkaline earth salts; hydrolyzates of crosslinked inoculated polysaccharide/acrylate or alkyl methacrylate copolymers, hydrolyzates of reticulated inoculated polysaccharide/acrylonitrile copolymers, hydrolyzates of crosslinked polysaccharide/acrylamide copolymers; hydrolyzates of crosslinked alkyl/vinyl acetate acrylate or methacrylate copolymers; hydrolyzates of crosslinked inoculated starch/acrylonitrile/acrylamide/2-methylpropane sulfonic acid copolymers; hydrolyzates of crosslinked inoculated starch/acrylonitrile/vinylsulfonic acid copolymers; hydrolyzates of

reticulated sodium carboxy-methylcellulose and analogous products and mixtures of such products; crosslinked polymers of acrylic or methacrylic acid; crosslinked inoculated polysaccharide/acrylic or methacrylic acid copolymers, and ternary crosslinked acrylic or methacrylic acid/acrylamide/sulfonated acrylamide copolymers.

14. (Twice Amended) Compositions for preservative treatment of raw animal hides as specified in claim 1, wherein ratios of the superabsorbent polymer and other hygroscopic agent or agents range from 80 to 20% by weight.

17. (Twice Amended) Compositions for preservative treatment of raw animal hides as specified in claim 1, wherein the superabsorbent polymers have a grain size smaller than approximately 6 mm.

21. (Twice Amended) Compositions for preservative treatment of raw animal hides as specified in claim 1, wherein such compositions contain one or more members of the group consisting of a bactericide, an antiseptic agent, and a preservation agent.

24. (Twice Amended) Compositions for preservative treatment of raw animal hides as specified in claim 1, wherein such compositions contain the following superabsorbents and hygroscopic agent:

NaCl + superabsorbent 1 (reticulated polyacrylate; grain size 0.5-3 mm) or
superabsorbent 2

(Reticulated polyacrylate; grain size 100-800 microns) or

superabsorbent 1 + superabsorbent 2

(Reticulated polyacrylate + reticulate acrylamide/acrylate copolymer, grain size 0.1 to 3 mm) or

superabsorbent 3

(Chloroethylated, reticulated (2-(idern)-methacrylate) acrylamide copolymer, grain size 0.5-3 mm) or

superabsorbent 4

(Chloromethylated, reticulated ((2-dimethyl-amino ethyl) acrylate) acrylamide copolymer, grain size 0.5-3 mm)

25. (Twice Amended) Compositions for preservative treatment of raw animal hides as specified in claim 1, wherein such compositions contain the following agents: reticulated acrylamide/acrylate

200 g/kg hide of superabsorbent

200 g/kg hide of NaCl.

31. (Twice Amended) A method for preserving an animal hide comprising applying an effective amount of the composition of claim 1 to the animal hide.

32. (Twice Amended) A method for preserving an animal hide comprising applying an effective amount of the composition of claim 1 and one or more hygroscopic agent(s) to the animal hide.

34. (Amended) The composition of claim 1 wherein said super absorbent polymers are (meth)acrylic acid, acrylic acid, methacrylic acid, maleic acid, or fumaric acid.

35. (Amended) The composition of claim 1 wherein said super absorbent polymers are maleic anhydride.

36. (Amended) The composition of claim 1 wherein said super absorbent polymers are sodium (meth)acrylate, trimethylamine (meth)acrylate, triethanolamine (meth)acrylate, sodium maleate or methylamine maleate.

37. (Amended) The composition of claim 1 wherein said super absorbent polymers are vinylsulfonic acid, allylsulfonic acid, vinyltoluenesulfonic acid or styrene sulfonic acid.

38. (Amended) The composition of claim 1 wherein said super absorbent polymers are (meth)acrylic sulfonic acids (sulfopropyl (meth)acrylate, propyl 2-hydroxy-3-(meth)acryoxide sulfonic acid.

39. (Amended) The composition of claim 1 wherein said super absorbent polymers are (meth)allyl alcohol, ethers or esters of polyols with monoethylene unsaturation, alkylene glycols, glycerol, polyoxyalkylene polyols, hydroxyethyl (meth)acrylate, hydroxypropyl (meth)acrylate, triethylene glycol (meth)acrylate or mono

(meth)allyl ether of poly(oxyethylene) oxypropylene (in which the hydroxyl groups may be etherified or esterified).

40. (Amended) The composition of claim 1 wherein said super absorbent polymers are N-methylacrylamide, N-hexylacrylamide, N,N-dimethylacrylamide, N,N-di-n-propylacrylamide, N-methyl (meth)acrylamide, N-hydroxyethyl (meth)acrylamide, N,N-dihydroxyalkyl (meth)acrylamides, N,N-dihydroxyethyl (meth)acrylamide, vinyl lactames or N-vinylpyrrolidone.

41. (Amended) The composition of claim 1 wherein said super absorbent polymers are esters of morpho-linoalkyl, dimethylaminoethyl (meth)acrylate, diethylaminoethyl (meth)acrylate, mopholinoethyl (meth)acrylate, dimethylaminoethyl fumarate, vinyl pyridines, 2-vinyl pyridine, 4-vinyl pyridine, N-vinyl pyridine or N-vinyl imidazole.

42. (Amended) The composition of claim 1 wherein said super absorbent polymers are N,N,N-trimethyl-N-(meth)acryloyloxyethylammonium chloride, triethyl-N-(meth)acryloyloxyethylammonium chloride or trimethyl ammonium 2-hydroxy-3-(meth)acryloyl-oxypropyl).

43. (Amended) The composition of claim 1 wherein said super absorbent polymers are reticulation products of an acrylic acid homopolymer or of a salt of this